

opportunities to create a safer world by building a better world. For the sake of our common security and for the sake of our common values, the international community must rise to this historic moment. And the United States is prepared to lead.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on September 17 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 17 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With First-Responders in Orange Beach, Alabama

September 19, 2004

Listen, thank you all for coming. Today I've been joined by Governor Riley and Governor Bush, Alabama and Florida, and Members of the Senate from Alabama, Sessions and Shelby, Congressman Jo Bonner, Congressman Miller from Florida, mayors from the affected areas, Mayor Russo, Bodenhamer, and Russell.

The devastation caused by Ivan is terrible. This was a big storm that caused a lot of damage and a lot of suffering. And I want to thank the people that are working hard to bring some sense of order in the lives of these citizens, folks at the State level and at the local level. I want to thank the FEMA workers for laying the foundation for what is going to be a recovery.

I was—I know people all across our country join me in praying for the families of those who suffered loss of life. I want to thank the search and rescue teams from all over the United States who are here, using every possible asset they have to find those who are still missing.

We understand thousands don't have power. I want to thank the power companies that understand that they have an obligation and a duty to restore power as quickly as possible. There are a lot of people working for the power companies, a lot of people stringing line from all over the southeast of

our country. I want to thank them for taking time to come down here and help the people sorely affected by this terrible storm.

We toured the beaches in Florida and Alabama and saw how powerful this storm was. But the Governors and I fully understand there are people inland who have been affected. There are people in rural Alabama, small-town Alabama whose lives have been turned upside down by this storm as well, people in rural Florida who have been affected by this storm. And I want them to understand that when I talk about FEMA help, FEMA help not only extends to the beaches; it extends to people inland here in the State of Alabama and in Florida as well.

The amazing thing about these catastrophes is how the American people rise to the occasion. The amazing thing about devastation is how there is such compassion in the face of such devastation. When I was visiting with some of the residents, they were telling me the amount of—number of people that have showed up just to provide help, people that have heard a call to love a neighbor in a time of distress. And I want to thank all those who have come to provide help to a neighbor in need.

I want to appreciate our National Guard troops who are here for providing stability. I went to the National Guard bureau convention in Vegas the other day and quoted a woman from Florida, from the Punta Gorda area, who said it brought her such great comfort to see those who wear the uniform, and I appreciate you doing that.

I want to thank the police and firefighters from this part of the world, who have been working overtime, for their compassion, for providing stability so people can, at some point in time, get their lives back in order.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to provide aid as quickly as possible. FEMA Director Brown is with me today. He has done an excellent job on the two hurricanes that hit Florida earlier. He will do an excellent job on this hurricane as well in making sure that all Federal aid is coordinated well with the State and local governments, making sure all the aid that is available gets down here as quickly as possible.

I also want to assure the farmers from this part of the world, the nurserymen in this part

of the world that we will have a plan worked out to help you, that we have an obligation at the Federal level to provide assistance, and that assistance will be detailed so you understand what kind of help is available. As well we understand—fully understand that the highways have been affected here, that many of the roads are impassible. We're going to work with Congress to ensure that highways and bridges are repaired as quickly as possible.

I want to thank the—again, I want to thank the local officials for rising to the occasion. Most of all, I want to tell the citizens of this part of the world that we're praying for you, that we'll get help out here as quickly as we can, and that we ask God's blessings on you and your family.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. at Orange Beach Fire and Rescue Station 1. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Mayor Steve Russo of Orange Beach, AL; Mayor David L. Bodenhamer of Gulf Shores, AL; and Mayor Tim Russell of Foley, AL.

Remarks in a Discussion in Derry, New Hampshire

September 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be back. Please be seated. Proud you all are here. Thanks for coming. Hey, buddy, how you doing? Thank you. It's great to be back in New Hampshire. We carried it in 2000. With your help, we'll carry it again in 2004.

That's what I'm here to ask for, your help. I do need your help. I need your help to register your friends and neighbors. I need your help to turn people out to the polls in about 40-something days. Who's counting? [Laughter] I'm here to talk to you about making sure that you understand I have a reason to run again. I want to keep this country—I've got an agenda, a vision for a safer world and a more hopeful America.

This is going to be a little different from most rallies. This is an opportunity for me to talk to some of your fellow citizens here and to talk about how we're going to make

sure America is a hopeful place, talk to some business leaders and people who went back to get job training, talk about tax relief. I'm also going to answer questions, which is kind of a New Hampshire tradition, if I remember correctly. And it's a great tradition. Traditional people take your politics seriously. Traditional people expect there to be a reason for running.

My only regret today is Laura is not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know, a lot of people feel that way. They kind of wish I'd stayed home and she came instead. But she's doing great. She is a great First Lady. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, but I don't want to have to give any political speeches." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." [Laughter] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She gave a great speech in New York City at our convention. People got to see a strong, compassionate soul.

And I appreciate running with Dick Cheney. He's a great Vice President and a wonderful friend and a good partner. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hair. [Laughter] I picked him for his judgment and his sound experience. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank Governor Craig Benson. I hope you put him back in office. He's a good man. [Applause] I appreciate it. New Hampshire is an entrepreneurial State. There's a lot of entrepreneurs here in New Hampshire, kind of independent-minded people who, all they want is a chance to succeed. Craig understands that. He knows the role of Government is not to create wealth but create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish. I agree with him. And that's one of the many reasons why I hope you put him back in as the Governor of this great State. I appreciate you, Craig.

I want to thank Congressman Jeb Bradley. I appreciate you being here, Congressman. Good to see you. He's got a great first name. [Laughter] At least that's what the Governor of Florida thinks. [Laughter] And I want to thank my friend Charlie Bass. I appreciate you being here, Charlie. They're two really